

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 20 are now pending in the application. Claims 1, 7 and 10 are herein amended. Claims 11-20 are herein added. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

SPECIFICATION

Applicants have amended the specification to correct several informalities. Paragraph [0004] has been amended to correct the spelling of "one" in the first line. Paragraph [0005] has been amended to insert the word "a" in the third line. Paragraph [0014] has been amended to correct part number "20" in line 2 and to correct the spelling of "form" in the seventh line. Paragraph [0022] has been amended to correct the reference numeral [220] in line 16 to 228 for driven sprocket 228 defined in the previous sentence. Paragraph [0026] has been amended to correct the numeral [76'] to 72' in reference to the pilot segment 72' identified in Figure 4 and similar to pilot segment 72 identified in Figure 1, and to correct the reference to numeral 110a' from [110A'] for the radial plate segment 110a', to agree with Figure 4. Paragraph [0027] has been amended to correct the numeral [256] to 258 in reference to the end cap 258 identified in Figure 4. The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the amended paragraphs.

DRAWINGS

Applicants have attached revised drawings for the Examiner's approval. In the "Replacement Sheets", Figure 1 has been amended to add part numbers 42 and 46 to each of the rear coupling 42 and the front coupling 46 identified in paragraph [0014] of the specification.

Figure 2 has been amended to change part number [58e] to 58c, the correct part number of the outer hub 58c identified in paragraph [0015] of the specification; to change part number [65] to part number 64, the correct part number for the radial shoulder 64 identified in paragraph [0015] of the specification; to change the letter [D] to H representing the "H" position line described in paragraph [0020] of the specification; to change part number [174] to 175, the correct part number for the tubular section 175 identified in paragraph [0021] of the specification; to add the numeral 176 in reference to peripheral groove 176 described in paragraph [0021] of the specification; and to correct part number [204] to part number 214 in reference to spring 214 described in paragraph [0022] of the specification.

Figure 4 has been amended to incorporate the same changes made to Figure 2 for common incorrect or missing part numbers or letters. Figure 4 has been further amended to delete reference to numeral 20 and its reference arrow.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the revised drawings in the application.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2 and 4 through 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimizu et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,286,238). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is initially noted Claim 1 has been amended herein to recite in part:

“a one-piece housing including first and second apertures aligned on a first axis and a third aperture aligned on a second axis, and a circumferentially extending annular shoulder extending radially inwardly relative to said first aperture; and a first cover plate slidably received within said first aperture and abuttingly engaged with said shoulder, said first cover plate including a first opening”. Specification paragraph [0015] supports this amendment.

The Examiner noted Shimizu et al. discloses a one piece housing 11 defining first and second apertures and a first cover plate C enclosing said first aperture. Applicants note that item C of Shimizu et al. is a casing of a primary power transmission. See column 2, lines 33-35. Housing 11 of Shimizu et al. does not include a circumferentially extending annular shoulder extending radially inwardly relative to said first aperture as recited in amended Claim 1. Also, per Figure 1, primary power transmission casing C is fastenably engaged to housing 11 at an outside perimeter of housing 11. Shimizu et al. therefore does not disclose a first cover plate slidably received within said first aperture and abuttingly engaged with said shoulder as recited in amended Claim 1.

Shimizu et al. therefore does not anticipate amended Claim 1. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of Claim 1. Because

Claims 2 and 4-6 depend from Claim 1, Shimizu et al. therefore does not anticipate Claims 2 or 4-6 for at least the same reasons. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of Claims 2 and 4-6.

Shimizu et al. does not anticipate amended Claim 3 for the following additional reason. Shimizu et al. does not disclose a substantially constant wall thickness for either output shaft 13 or 14. As disclosed in Figure 1 of Shimizu et al., the wall thickness of first output shaft 13 is substantially thicker proximate to sun gear 41. Similarly, the wall thickness of second output shaft 14 is substantially thicker proximate to driven sprocket 62. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of Claim 3 for this additional reason.

Shimizu et al. does not anticipate amended Claim 4, which has been amended to depend from Claim 3, for the following additional reason. Shimizu et al. does not disclose a first output shaft having a tapered transition segment integrally interconnecting a pilot segment to a shaft segment, said tapered transition segment having said substantially constant wall thickness as recited in amended Claim 4. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of Claim 4 for this additional reason.

It is initially noted Claim 7 has been amended herein to recite in part:

“a one-piece housing including first and second apertures aligned on a first axis and a third aperture and a boss portion aligned on a second axis, a circumferentially extending first annular shoulder extending radially inwardly relative to said first aperture, and a circumferentially extending

second annular shoulder extending radially inwardly relative to said third aperture;

a first cover plate slidably received within said first aperture and abuttingly engaged with said first shoulder, said first cover plate including a first opening;

a second cover plate slidably received within said third aperture and abuttingly engaged with said second shoulder”.

Support for this amendment is found in the specification, paragraphs [0015] and [0018].

In addition to the limitations discussed above in reference to amended Claim 1, Claim 7 has been further amended to further recite a second cover plate which is slidably received within a third aperture of the housing which abuttingly engages a second annular shoulder. Shimizu et al. does not disclose this feature. Shimizu et al. therefore does not anticipate amended Claim 7. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of Claim 7. Because Claims 8 and 9 depend from Claim 7, Shimizu et al. therefore does not anticipate Claims 8 or 9 for at least the same reasons. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of Claims 8 and 9.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimizu et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,286,238). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is initially noted Claim 3 has been amended herein to recite in part:

“said first and second tubular output shafts each comprise a formed tube having a metallurgical grain structure that is generally continuous, said first tubular output shaft further having a substantially constant wall thickness.”

Support for this amendment is found in paragraph [0024] of the specification.

Further, Claim 1, from which Claim 3 depends, has been amended as previously noted herein to recite in part:

“a circumferentially extending annular shoulder extending radially inwardly relative to said first aperture;

a first cover plate slidably received within said first aperture and abuttingly engaged with said shoulder, said first cover plate including a first opening”.

Shimizu et al. appears to teach a power transfer device having a housing 11 and first and second output shafts 13, 14 with multiple mechanisms 20, 30, 50, 60, and 70 for changing the output of the power transfer device. See column 2, lines 31-44. The first output shaft 13 includes several step changes in diameter throughout its length. See Figures 1 and 2. The second output shaft 14 also includes several step changes in diameter throughout its length. See Figure 1. Shimizu et al. therefore teaches away from an output shaft having substantially constant wall thickness as recited in amended Claim 3. Further, Shimizu et al. does not teach or suggest a circumferentially extending

annular shoulder extending radially inwardly relative to said first aperture or a cover plate slidably received within said first aperture and abuttingly engaged with said shoulder as recited in amended Claim 1, from which Claim 3 depends.

The modification of Shimizu et al. therefore cannot render either amended Claim 1 or amended Claim 3 obvious. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claim 3.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that Claim 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicant has amended Claim 10 to include the limitations of the base Claim 7 and any intervening claims. Therefore, Claim 10 should now be in condition for allowance.

NEW CLAIMS


Claims 11-20 are added herein defining features supported by the Specification and Figures and as described in reference to amended Claims 1, 3, 4 and 7 herein. The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter Claims 11-20.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 11, 2005

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheets" of drawings include changes to Figures 1, 2 and 4. The attached "Replacement Sheets 1/4, 2/4, and 4/4" which includes Figures 1, 2 and 4, replace the original sheets 1/4, 2/4 and 4/4 including Figures 1, 2 and 4.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets 1/4, 2/4 and 4/4

Annotated Sheets 1/4, 2/4 and 4/4 Showing Changes

1/4

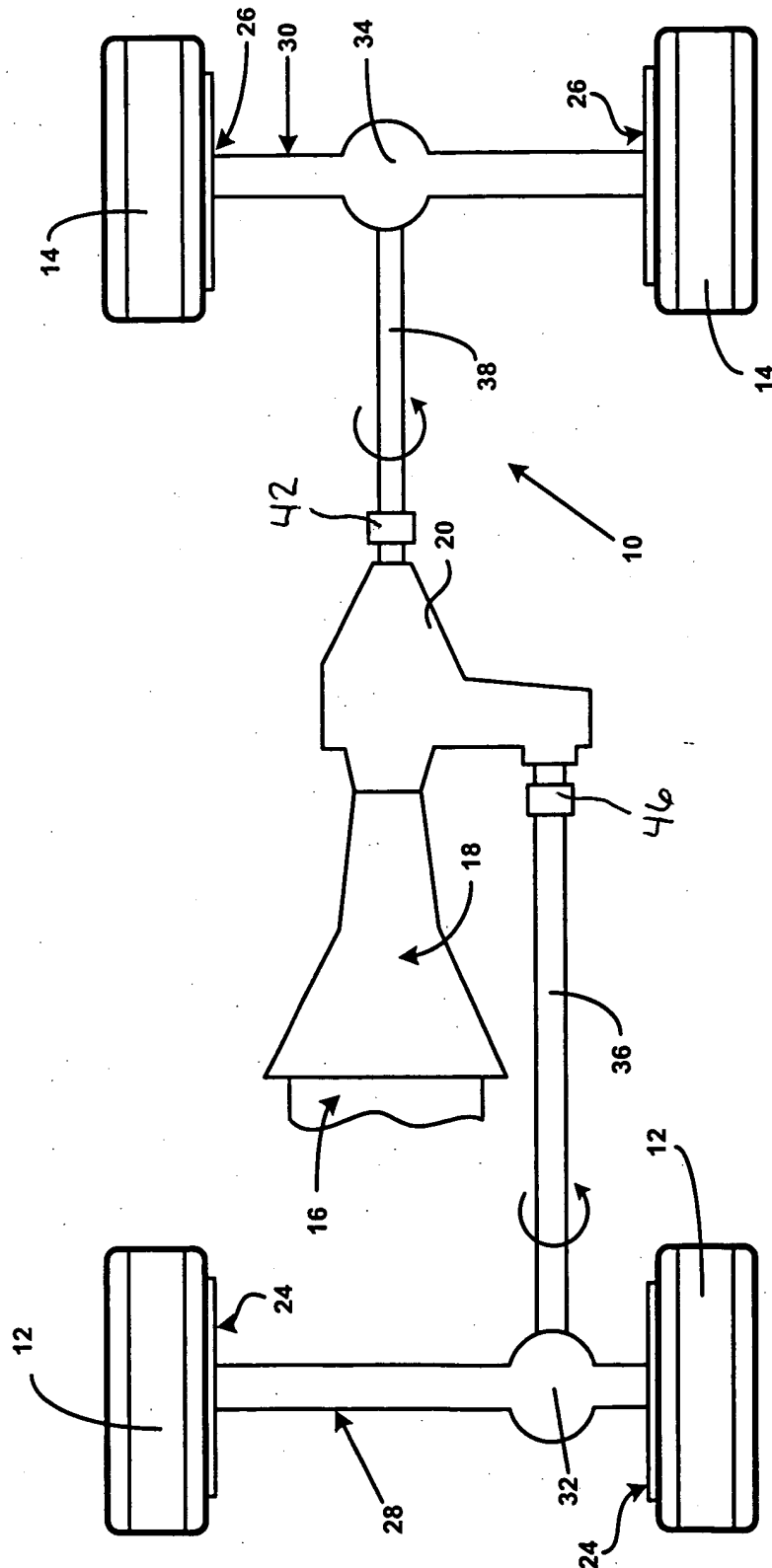
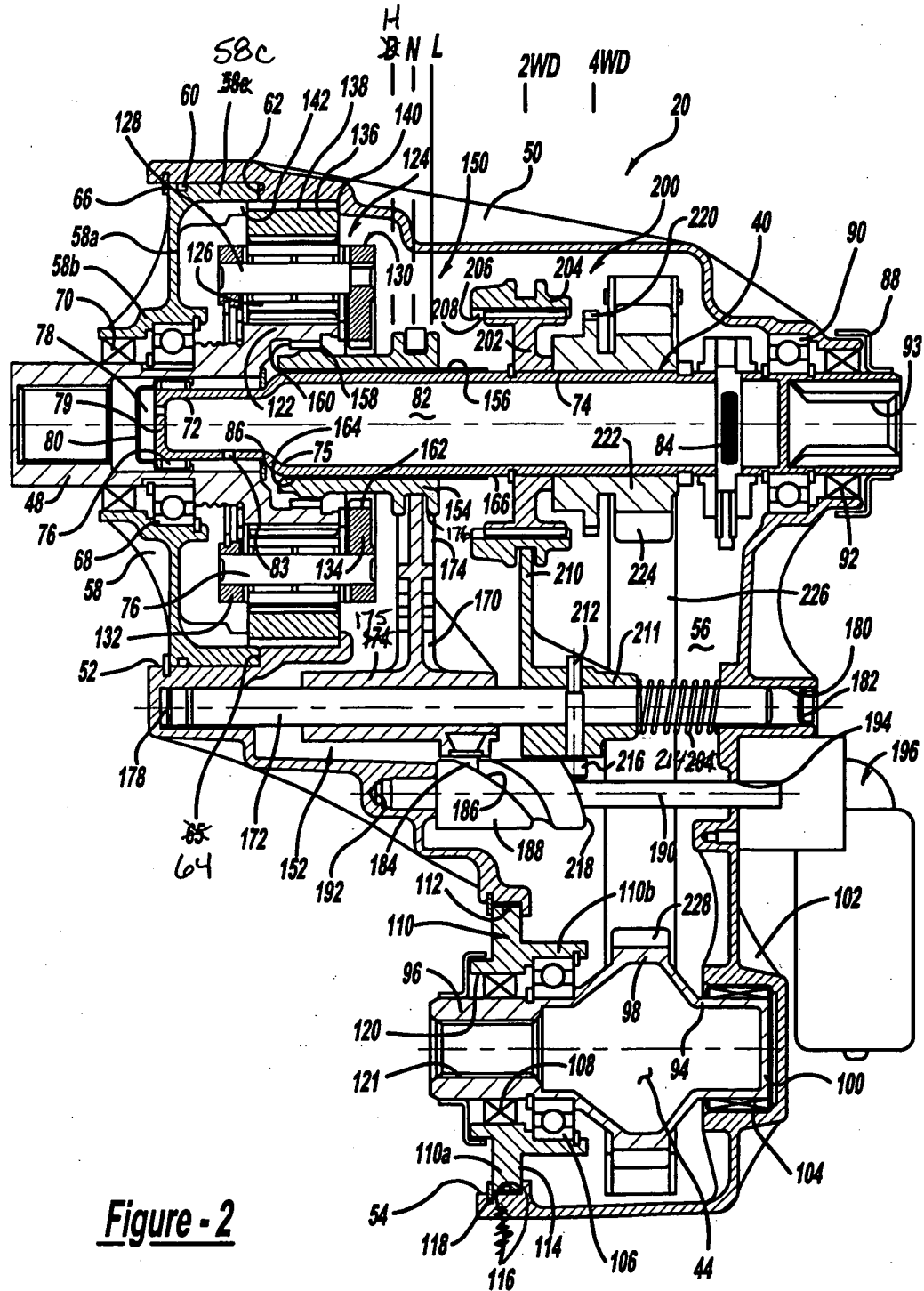


Figure - 1

2/4



4/4

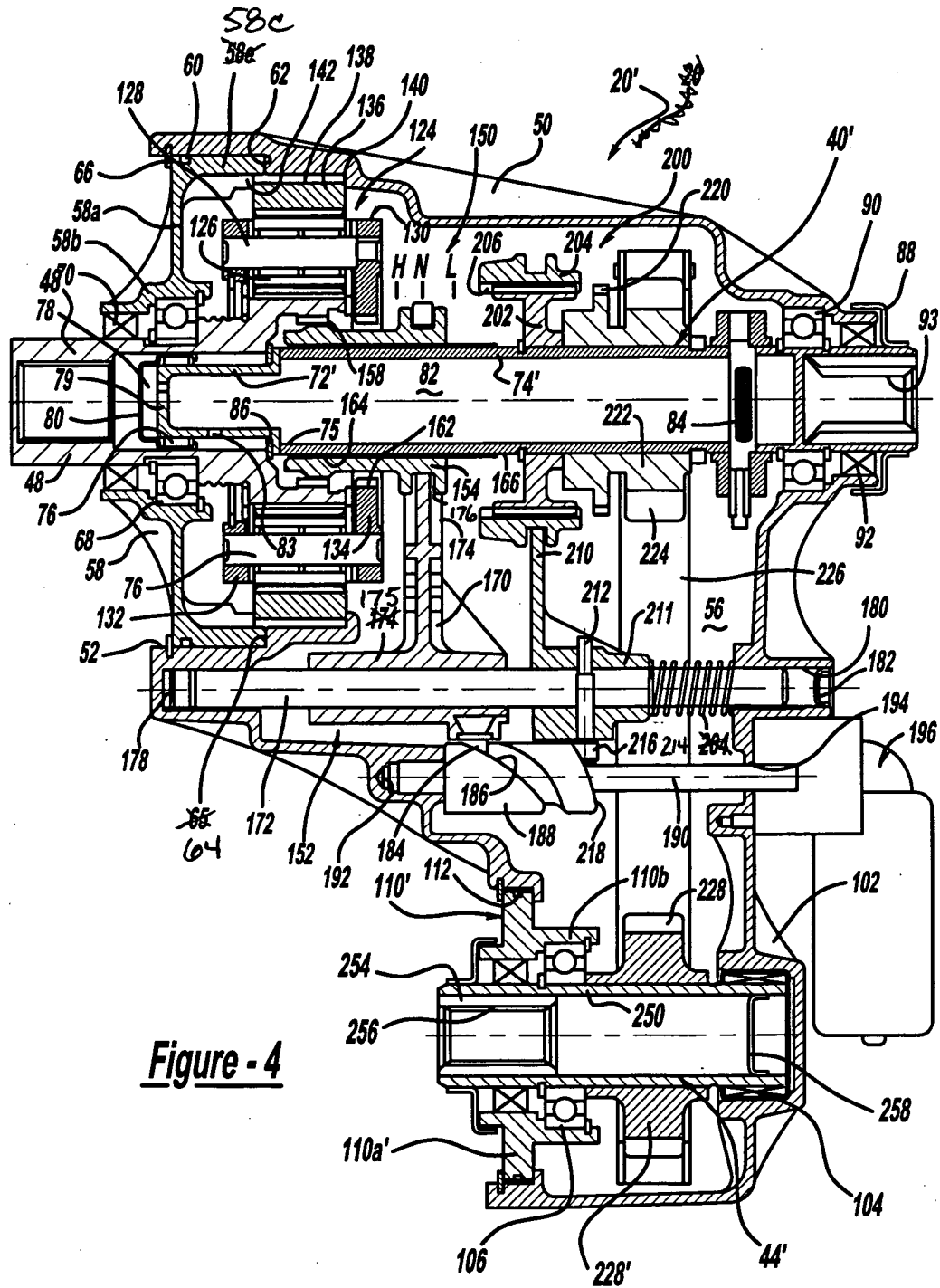


Figure - 4